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THE LADIES' WREATH AND PARLOR ANNUAL.

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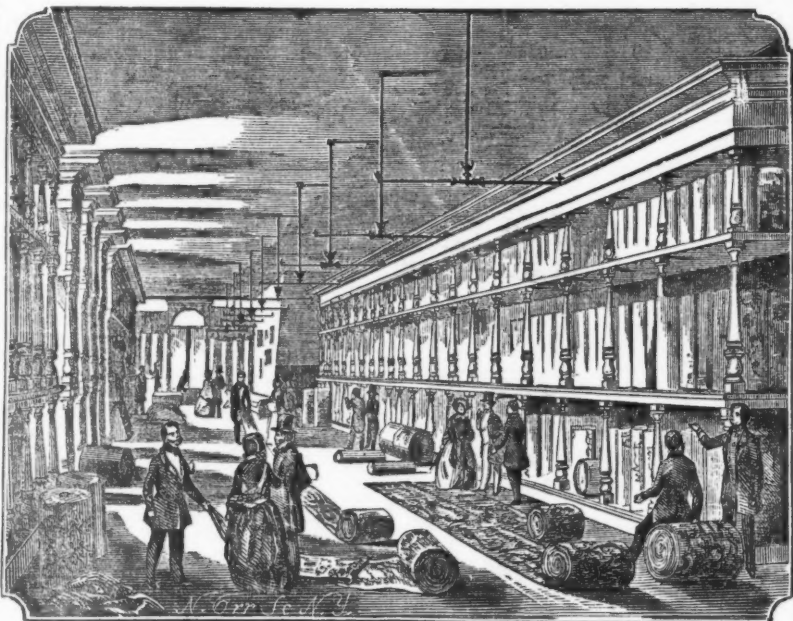
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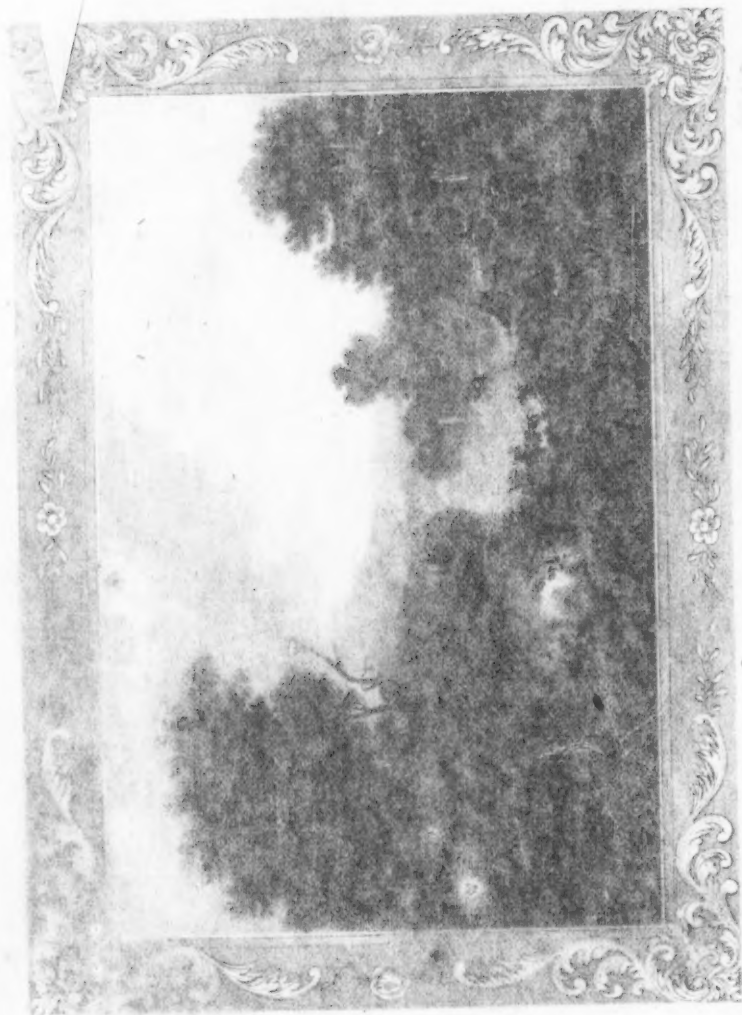
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Scene on Lake George



Verbena V. blanda



View of Lake George



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OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN.

BY ELIZABETH G. BARBER.

SOME people have a wondrous amiability of disposition, which enables them to bear, not only the common cares and troubles of life, with the greatest equanimity, but calmly to submit to all the impositions to which amiable people are usually subjected, as if they were only matters of course. Strange to say, the very calmness and resignation with which they allow themselves to be cheated and imposed upon, instead of awakening sympathy or admiration, serve only to stimulate their persecutors to more outrageous taxes upon their benevolence, or forbearance, as the case may be. Even for myself, though I indignantly repudiate the idea of taking advantage of an unsuspecting and very accommodating individual, I must conscientiously acknowledge that I never had any particular admiration or veneration for very amiable people, because their sweetness and obliging ways are no merit or virtue of their own. They are amiable from necessity, and would be obliged to put themselves to a great deal of trouble to be otherwise.

An old friend, some years my senior, is an excellent specimen of this class. A few years had transformed her from a blooming, good-natured school-girl, into a matronly wife and mother; and not long since I visited herself and household, in the distant city which is now her home. Occasional correspondence had kept me "posted up," as the merchants say, as to the accession of "olive plants" about her board, and I therefore expected to see quite a little group of Willies, Fannies and Charlies, with perhaps a nameless baby; but I must own that I was quite unprepared for the sight of the regiment of children of all sizes, who came rushing to the hall-door with Mrs. Benson, whose warmly affectionate greeting and sunshiny face gave promise of a cordial welcome.

Never having seen any of her children before, I prudently delayed exchanging compliments with the waiting crowd, until made aware of their identity, and followed my friend into the family sitting-room, followed in turn by ten or eleven youngsters.

"These are not all *your* children, Fanny, of course?" said I, looking around upon the throng of young ladies and gentlemen, who had grouped themselves in various attitudes of surprise, admiration, and deferential awe, and were looking at me at a respectful distance.

"Of course not," gleefully rejoined Fanny, with the merry laugh of olden time, "I hope it did not enter your head that all these belonged to me;" though from what I knew of her easy disposition, and matter-of-course habits, it would not have afforded her any especial solicitude if the whole twelve had belonged to her. "Most of these are my neighbors' children: I have four besides the baby, and I want to see if you can recognize any of them from the description I have written to you."

Had I followed her glance as it rested on the children, I might perhaps have seen an expression of maternal fondness, and peculiar interest which would have been some clue by which I might have designated her own children; but as I did not, my eye fell upon one of two children, who looked as though they might be near the age of Fanny's oldest.

"This I suppose is Maggie; come here, dear," said I, encouragingly holding out my hand to the child in question.

"That is not Maggie," said Mrs. Benson—"this is my Maggie;" and she presented the other child, whose friendship I soon succeeded in gaining.

"Then there were Charlie and Willie, I believe," remarked I, after learning that the imaginary Maggie was a neighbor's child, of about the same age; and again at a venture, I selected Charlie from the crowd; but he proved to be the son of a Mrs. Jones who lived round the corner, and who spent the principal part of his time, Sundays excepted, with the true Charlie, who advanced from the troop to be presented to me.

Willie I readily selected from his resemblance to his mother, and was so much elated at my sagacity, that with a very triumphant air, I rashly pointed out a little blue-eyed girl as little Fannie; but she proved to be Alice Stetson, the child of their next door neighbor. As a *dernier resort*, I turned to the cradle, thinking that here, at least, there could be no mistake.

"Here's the precious baby!" I exclaimed, bestowing a kiss upon a sleeping cherub; "I should know Fanny Benson's baby anywhere!"

I never saw Fanny look so crest-fallen before, and I fear my reputation as a physiognomist, upon which I pride myself somewhat, received a death-blow, in her estimation from that moment.

"That isn't our baby," she replied; "that is my sister-in-law's child, which is staying here till her other children get over the whooping cough. Bridget has taken out *our* baby this afternoon."

I should have returned to my seat, discomfited, that being the first time I had seen, or fancied I had seen, in the countenance of

of an infant, any resemblance to maternal or paternal progenitors, and my remark being such a decided failure; but I bethought myself of a huge paper of confectionery in my traveling-bag, which I distributed, *ad libitum*, among the group.

"I am glad you are fond of children, Gertrude," remarked Fanny, sweetly, "for our little ones have just commenced a month's vacation, and as most of the neighbors send to the same school, I expect we shall have a noisy time."

Now I am fond of children—I am willing to make due allowance for the exuberance of youthful gaiety, and the happy, innocent hilarity of childhood, but when in a few minutes, attracted by some object without, the whole twelve rushed into the garden, shouting and laughing—and looking out, I saw three more boys, risking life and limb by climbing over the spiked fence, into Mrs. Benson's garden, while one or two more were seated in a contemplative attitude on the topmost bough of a neighboring apple tree—I must confess to some misgivings on the subject of quiet.

Tea-time brought Mr. Benson, a very quiet, good-natured man, who possessed, in common with his lady, the much-to-be-coveted faculty of taking things easy. He brought with him a friend, and his friend's two boys, who were to pay a short visit in the town and make Mrs. Benson's house their home while they staid. This announcement was received with unfeigned delight by Charlie, Willie, Fanny, Maggy, and two of the neighbors' children, who had invited themselves to tea.

The next morning I rose at an early hour, and while seated at my window, admiring the beauty of the landscape, and the quiet of the streets, which had scarcely yet begun to be agitated by the business and tumult of the day, I saw a little girl, in a very *neglige* toilette, unwashed and uncombed, making her way towards the house where I was domiciliated. None of the family had risen, excepting the servant, who was busy sweeping the door-steps. "I want to see Maggy and Fanny," she said, accosting the Irish girl.

"So ye've come, wid the sun's risin, again, have ye?" asked the good-natured Bridget, in a tone of mingled amazement and chagrin. "Faix ye'd better go back the way ye came, for Miss Maggy nor Fanny isn't out of their beds, nor isn't likely to be, these two hours." The little girl, however, insisted upon going in, and presently, by the commotion in the children's room, I concluded that the morning visitor had succeeded in effecting an entrance there. Some time afterward, on going down to breakfast, I found the family circle enlivened by her presence, as well as that of two children, whom I

had not seen the previous evening, and who were loitering about in the vicinity of the breakfast table, and regarding the food with hungry eyes.

"You have an early visitor, this morning, Fanny," said I, relating the occurrence of the morning, as I saw the little girl taking her seat, as a matter of course, with the children.

"Yes," rejoined Fanny quickly, "that is May Wilson. Her mother is out of town, and she is left in charge of the servants.—She has acquired the habit, for some time past, of getting up before the family has risen, and coming over here. I suppose I ought not to encourage it, but I feel sorry for the child, who is quite neglected at home."

The early advent of this young lady only illustrated the sentiment of the poet, that "coming events cast their shadows before," for ere ten o'clock, a troop of children, of various ages and sizes, had assembled about the premises, it being their school vacation, and the little Bensons, possessing eminently social qualities, had availed themselves of this felicitous circumstance, and had given a standing invitation, to their particular friends and acquaintances generally, to make their arrangements to spend a large portion of their leisure time with them. This invitation, it is hardly necessary to say, was cordially accepted, and so generally that even Mrs. Benson, as she looked out of the window, remarked quietly, that she did not know there were so many children in the neighborhood, and she was afraid that they would be rather troublesome before the vacation was over. This reflection, however, did not seem to cause her much solicitude, for she went about her customary avocations with a countenance expressive of the utmost serenity, while the children, within and without the house, were making noise enough to awaken the Seven Sleepers.

To give a minute description of that day's proceedings, would subject the reader to that state of distraction on which I was nearly bordering before nine o'clock at night. To tell how the children ranged from cellar to attic, from parlors to kitchen, screaming, shouting, sliding down bannisters, and upsetting furniture, traversing the garden, trampling down herbs and flowers, and spreading a scene of confusion and devastation all about them, would require a more graphic pen than mine to narrate. And thus it went on for a week, with such a variety of incidents constantly occurring, as to keep me in a state of wild excitement.

One day, Willie was enticed away, by a neighbor's child, to a distant part of the city, and after anxious search, while the whole

household was extremely alarmed, he was found after eleven o'clock at night on one of the wharves. Another day, in compliance with the suggestion of a neighbor's child, the children placed a board across the area, above the basement windows, and about a dozen seated themselves on it, when it broke down, precipitating them *en masse* into the area. Little Fanny's shoulder was dislocated, and several of the others were severely bruised and stunned. This, however, did not prevent them from making their appearance the next day.

By degrees I became about as much accustomed to the presence of half a dozen neighbors' children as to Mrs. Benson's. There was the "early riser," as I denominated her, who usually took breakfast with us, and despatched her other meals at home, hastening back again with the greatest rapidity; and who several times suggested that "she would as lief sleep with Maggy and Fanny as not," for the privilege of staying all night. This proposition, however, Mrs. Benson mildly declined. Then there were two children, whose mother was a music teacher, and obliged to give lessons abroad.—They availed themselves of her absence to visit us, and as she came home, fatigued and care-worn, did not like to hear their noise, and took no pains to keep them at home, so that we enjoyed a great deal of their society. Another little boy had an unkind step-mother, and as Mrs. Benson's sympathies were enlisted in his behalf, we were usually sure of his company. For equally good reasons, one or two others were as unremitting in their attentions, so that through storm or sunshine we were never without our full complement of juveniles. Mrs. Benson bore noise, accident, and all, with the most amiable equanimity—in fact, she might have sat for "Miss Matty" in "Cranford;" and as her children were not allowed, out of her extreme politeness towards her neighbors, to leave their own premises, she had the opportunity of exercising the virtues of benevolence and forbearance at home. Her usual remark, after some outrageous piece of carelessness or mischief was this, made in an apologetic tone, "You know, children will be children"—this philosophical and logical rejoinder being supposed to settle the affair entirely. Thus matters went on for two weeks, making confusion and disorder in the house, such as none but individuals as amiable as Fanny and her husband would have endured.

But there came a crisis at last. It was an excessively hot day.—Fanny had a violent tooth-ache, but was obliged to attend to her washwoman and dressmaker alternately, besides tending her own baby, who exhibited symptoms of the scarlet fever, while her sister-

in-law's baby, affected by the heat, was screaming in the arms of its mother. The infant had just been quieted for a few moments—Maggie, little Fanny, and the "early riser" had settled down soberly to their dolls—Willie was absorbed in admiration of a new picture-book, which I had reserved for a case of special emergency, and Charlie was drawing very minute horses and astonishingly large dogs on his slate, while in the interval of quiet Mrs. Benson was bathing her aching face. Suddenly a deputation of neighbors' children rushed in, shouting and laughing. The girls threw down their dolls, and rushed to welcome the new comers. The step-mother's son snatched away the picture-book, whereupon Willie set up a loud cry, which wakened the two babies, who began to scream violently in turn.—Mrs. Benson's tooth gave an excruciating "jump"—the washwoman made her appearance at the door, saying,

"Plase, marm, the soap is gone intirely;" and the dressmaker followed her, saying,

"Now, Mrs. Benson, I wish to try on your dress immediately."

For once, Fanny's equanimity entirely deserted her, and she wrung her hands in distraction. "Oh! Gertrude," she exclaimed, "what *shall* I do?"

"Do!" rejoined I, feeling fully prepared at that moment for any and everything, "send these children home, every mother's son and daughter of them that don't belong to you; put this laudanum which I have prepared for you, on your tooth; let me take the baby and quiet the children, while Maggie gets the soap and you attend to your dressmaker."

"What! send my neighbors' children home?" exclaimed my friend in a tone which denoted great surprise and strong objections. "What will their mothers' think?"

"Let them think what they please," rejoined I undauntedly. "If they had thought a little more about what was due to their neighbors, they would have kept their children at home this hot day."

"But I fear I shall injure their feelings," urged Fanny.

"I'll risk their feelings," said I, in a tone of determination. "If your children had spent half their time at your neighbors' houses, as these children have here, those neighbors would have felt no delicacy about sending them home long ago. There is a point beyond which forbearance ceases to be a virtue, and you have been grossly imposed upon. It would be serving them just right, to make each child hold the baby in turn, and catch the scarlet-fever. That would keep them home for three weeks at the very least."

Fanny forgot washerwoman, tooth-ache, and all, and burst into a merry laugh, at the absurdity of this suggestion ; saying, that she had before no idea that I was so inhuman.

"You see, Fanny," said I, warming with my subject, "these people do not appreciate your kindness in keeping your children at home and entertaining theirs. My word for it, if your four children and half a dozen more, should burst into their houses, like a troop of young Arabs, and rush vociferating and laughing from the attic to the cellar, upsetting furniture and breaking crockery, you would soon see them coming home at a rapid pace. They would have some idea then of the inconvenience they are causing you."

"But perhaps their mothers don't know that they are out," interposed Fanny, unconsciously assuming that popular expression which has now become a vulgarism.

"More shame to them," said I warmly. "They ought to know where their children are every hour of their lives, what associations they are forming, and what habits they are learning." I might have proceeded to quite an exordium on maternal duty, had not the state of affairs around me demanded immediate attention. "These children here, however," continued I, "if you will question them, I think you will find that their mothers *do* know where they are, or if they were wanted in a hurry, would have some remote idea as to where they might find them. At any rate, I will try the experiment"—and I called to me a little boy, who seemed to have a suspicion of what I was talking about, and stood looking at me with open mouth and eyes.

"Come here, boy," said I. "How did you happen to come here this morning? Did your mother say you might come?"

"Oh, yes," responded the boy, apparently much relieved. "She said she hoped I would stay all day, for she was going to have company, and was so busy she didn't want me round."

I glanced at Fanny, who smiled in spite of her hurry and the tooth-ache.

"I will try another case," I continued, and called a little girl to me, who was particularly noisy.

"Are they washing at your house to-day?" I enquired, displaying a little feminine curiosity.

"Yes, that's the reason I came over here," she replied promptly, and in a tone of great unconcern. "Ma says she never wants any children where *she* is washing days."

I thought if the young lady in question had remained in the vici-

nity of her mother long enough to have had an application of soap and water to her countenance, the delay might have been beneficial, but I contented myself with giving Fanny another triumphant glance.

"My mother says she don't care where I go, if I'll only keep away when the baby's asleep," called out a little girl who was writhing and twisting into various postures, on the back of a rocking chair, and who seemed to have an inkling of what was going on.

"Now, without inquiring any farther, Fanny," said I, looking at her with considerable elation at my sagacity, "it must be evident to you, that these children were sent here expressly to be got out of the way at home, without any regard to your convenience; and although forbearance is a Christian virtue, in justice to yourself and children, under the present circumstances, these visitors ought to depart."

"It *is* rather inconvenient to have them here to-day," admitted Fanny.

"Of course it is," I said with energy. "Why don't you tell them so, and send them home? But if you feel delicate scruples about it, and will allow me, I will take the responsibility of dispersing this crowd."

Fanny gave me permission, of which I speedily availed myself.

"Now, children," said I, assuming an air of great determination, "you must, every one of you, go directly home, or at any rate, you must not stay here, and if your mothers ask why you come home, tell them Mrs. Benson has the tooth-ache, is very busy, and the baby has symptoms of the scarlet fever."

This last announcement, I thought, might prove more effectual with the parents than with the children. Slowly and reluctantly they prepared to depart, hoping perhaps that I should relent, but my countenance exhibited the inflexibility of a Roman matron.

"Recollect, that you are not to come again for four days," said I, as they left the room. I went to the window, and as they moved off in phalanx, my perceptions of the ludicrous overcame the slight promptings of compassion, and I laughed heartily at the position I had assumed. I doubt not the children thought me a kind of dragon.

"I feel sorry for them," remarked Fanny, in a pitying voice.—

"The poor children are not to blame."

"Of course not," I said, "but there is no use in being imposed upon. If there is any blame in the matter, I will bear the responsibility."

The four days passed, and by supplying the children with plenty of occupation and amusement, they made themselves quite content-

ed with one another, and were certainly far less boisterous than when surrounded by a troop of playmates. In the mean time, I was appointed door-keeper, and certainly the children, who ventured near the house in defiance of my prohibition, found me very rigorous, for not one of them was admitted. One little girl, however, evinced a degree of perseverance worthy of a better cause, for she never failed to return within half an hour after being sent home, but as she did not succeed in entering, her perseverance amounted to nothing.

On Saturday I announced that they might come and see the little Bensons, of which they did not fail to avail themselves, and having been separated for such a length of time, they met with great cordiality, and there was much less quarreling than usual. The whole family, including Fanny, were so much pleased with the present state of affairs, that I was prevailed upon to stay another week, until the vacation closed. In the mean time, but little excitement was caused among the families whose feelings Fanny had feared to wound. To be sure, the mother of the boy who lived across the street, and whose education and temper were never equal to any emergency, sent over word that, "she would thank Mrs. Benson to keep her own young ones at home, instead of sending home other people's children." This piece of advice, being so entirely out of place and superfluous, and said boy having broken more crockery for Mrs. Benson than all the other children collectively, she did not take it very much to heart. The literary lady round the corner called "to inquire of what heinous offence her children had been guilty, that they were not allowed to associate with Mrs. Benson's children"—but on being informed of the state of affairs, she perfectly agreed with us, and "feared her children had been troublesome, for being so absorbed with her books and pen, she seldom noticed whether they were at home or not."

Another family, whose children were much attached to the little Bensons, and greatly missed their society, invited them, in a christian-like manner, to come and take tea with them; and the little Bensons accordingly went, with much satisfaction. At the close of the vacation I returned home. I do not know whether Fanny has relapsed into her old easy habits respecting "other people's children," or whether the system of exclusion, except at stated times, is still kept up; but certain it is, that for my own part, I look back with complacency on my efforts to promote the peace of the Benson family.

FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE.

BY INEZ.

From the hour that Eve, our mother,
 In the bowers of Paradise,
 Gazed upon the shining apple
 With impatient, longing eyes,
 Till she touched it, grasped it, tasted—
 Thinking to be angel-wise,
 Till to-day, when eager spirits,
 Breaking from the Heavenly Guide,
 Wander through forbidden pathways,
 Restless and unsatisfied,
 Grasping Heaven's eternal secrets
 In their bold but fruitless pride,
 Every human heart inherits
 This delight in mysteries,
 We would steal the sacred knowledge
 That in God's own bosom lies,
 As in olden tale Prometheus
 Brought down fire from out the skies.
 In the midst of life's great garden
 Blossoms still the fatal tree,
 Still its shining fruit is tempting
 Wavering, weak humanity—
 Still the serpent underneath it,
 Whispers, "Gods ye all may be!"
 But 'tis not in ancient mysteries
 That the thoughts of God are found;
 His most precious revelations
 Daily in our ears resound,
 Blooming, breathing all about us
 His divinest truths abound.
 To our ardent aspirations
 He has given what we can bear,
 But alone in Heaven's full glory
 May we in His counsels share;
Here we see His love and mercy,
 We shall know His wisdom *there*.
 Close beside the tree forbidden,
 Shadowing it with lofty boughs,
 Stands the Tree of Life—and radiance
 Over all the earth it throws,
 Light divine, eternal, changeless,
 From each branch and blossom flows.
 Here is knowledge, rich and godlike,
 In the shadow of this tree!
 Here is food for fainting spirits,
 And the fruit to all is free.
 Take and eat, O restless seekers,
 And as angels ye shall be!

LITTLE ANNIE.

BY ABBIE E. FAIRBANK.

"TAKE me to the window, pa, that I may feel the warm sunshine, and see the birds and flowers once again!"

Thus spake a fair young girl, as she reclined upon her couch, one beautiful May morning. Oh, how lovely she looked as she lay there! Not a look of regret passed over her features because she must leave all she loved so well; but, instead, an almost heavenly expression beamed from her large, dark eyes.

For long weeks she had drooped and pined; and those who watched her faltering step, once so elastic, and saw the bright hectic flush her cheeks, knew she would soon be taken from them, and her merry voice and bird-like songs be hushed forever more on earth. Oh! 'twas hard to part with her so young. They had not thought that she *could die*, their only, *idolized* child, but had looked forward to years of happiness and love. They had worshipped the "gift instead of the Giver;" and now their bright visions were dashed aside, and the stern reality was before them. Who could tell the agony that seared their heart-strings as they gathered around her dying couch on that bright spring morn? Ah! none but those who have felt the same.

"Pa, ma, do not weep for me," she said, "for I am going to live with God in Heaven, and perhaps I shall be a little star; and when you see them shine at night, you will think 'tis your little Annie looking down upon you from her spirit home. There! I see the bright angels! They are calling me!—Yes, I'm coming! Good by, pa, good by, ma! I——" The little hands dropped, and the slight form quivered, then all was still. Her pure spirit had taken its flight to the realms of eternal glory.

They dressed her in white, with a rosebud upon her bosom; and there, beneath the old elm-tree, where so oft she was wont to play, they laid her.

The silver locks of the aged pastor floated upon the breeze, and his low, solemn voice arose above the stillness:

"The Lord loveth whom he chasteneth. He giveth and he taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

The violets and lilies grew upon her grave, and there the birds sang the sweetest; and as twilight threw its mantle upon the earth, you might see a fair lady and a noble-browed man kneeling beside that little mound, raising their voices in prayer, for they too had learned to put their trust in Him who doeth all things well.

LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

~~~~~  
BY MRS. SARAH S. SOWELL.  
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To tread with firm, unwavering step
The straight and narrow way;
To ever humbly trust in God,
To hope, and watch, and pray;

To wipe from sorrow's pallid cheek
The bitter, scalding tear;
To bless the child of want and woe,
And make his heart less drear;

To nerve the heart with heavenly strength
For this world's earnest strife,
To bravely battle for the right—
This, this is the true life.

And when the silver cord is loosed,
And earthly ties are riven,
To calmly turn from this fair earth,
And fix the thoughts on heaven;

To lean upon the Saviour's arm,
Through the dark valley's gloom;
And walk with firm and fearless tread,
The passage to the tomb;

To lay the frail, weak body down,
And yield the fleeting breath,
In deep, strong faith, and holy love,
This is triumphant death.

And then to soar on angel wings
To that fair world of joy,
Where God the Lord forever reigns,
And bliss knows no alloy;

To bow while circling ages roll
Before the great white throne,
And join the swelling songs of praise
To the Eternal One;

To dwell in innocence and love,
From sin and sorrow free,
To know no grief, no tears, no death,
Would be a heaven to me.

But ear cannot hear or heart conceive,
Nor can our vision see,
The glories, the supreme delights,
Of immortality.

MARY LEE.

BY LIZZIE ALLEN.

I HAVE a passion for the name of Mary. It has a pleasant, gentle sound which belongs not to other names. I know not why it is, but Mary is always associated in my mind with the pure, the beautiful, and good. I always think of Mary the mother of Jesus, and the Mary who sat at his feet, and the Mary so deeply penitent, anointing his feet, and wiping them with her hair. I knew a Mary once, a lovely, delicate creature with soft blue eyes, lips and cheeks like fresh rose-leaves, and fair neck and brow, shaded by a cloud of golden brown hair. There was ever a glance of thoughtful sadness in her lustrous eyes, and a trembling cadence in her low voice, as if the young heart were brimfull of melancholy tenderness. Mary had her faults like every one else ; but they had been so carefully watched by her parents, and she strove so earnestly herself to overcome them, that they were almost imperceptible ; so that her young companions thought that to be as good as Mary Lee, was to be very near perfect. But whenever any of us made a remark of this kind to her, she would always reply with tearful eyes,

“ Oh, if you only knew how very bad my heart is, you would not praise me for being good.”

But we went on wishing we were like Mary, and yet never trying to be like her ; for we could not help knowing where she learned to be so meek, and gentle, and kind, when we found her stolen away from our rude plays, reading her little Bible and learning Sabbath-school hymns, or when we saw her in old Widow White's little cottage, reading the Bible to the old lady who was nearly blind.

And so years passed on, and we grew up together ; Mary always seeming like a wild flower, which though fresh and vigorous, is exceedingly fair and delicate, bowing to the lightest breeze, although the rushing storm cannot entirely crush it. Her life had always flowed on like the clear meadow stream on whose banks we gathered violets, in a still, even current, with scarcely an eddy or a ripple to disturb its tranquillity. In her own pleasant home, where she was the only child left of a lovely family, with her books, her birds and flowers, and her kind parents, she never dreamed of the feverish strivings and dark, restless passions which swayed the world without. But time brings changes and trials and sorrows to all ; and so it was

with Mary. While on a visit at her uncle's, a message came; saying that her father was dangerously ill; and Mary was speedily on her way home with a sad and heavy heart, for this was the first time within her remembrance, that serious sickness had visited her family.

It was the Indian summer, and the sun looked dimly through the hazy atmosphere, while the perfect stillness that reigned around, seemed oppressive to Mary, as she walked up the broad lawn, now brilliantly carpeted with crimson and yellow leaves. Now and then, a leaf fluttered slowly through the air, and fell on the soft turf, or a startled bird chirped among the branches; but never had her loved home seemed so lonely and deserted as now. A faithful domestic who had resided many years with the family, met her at the door, and silently led her to her father's room. Mary had never looked on death, but she knew too well that his hours were numbered, and her first impulse was to fling herself on the bed in a wild, passionate burst of weeping; but the pale, anguished face of her stricken mother recalled her, and by a strong effort she subdued the violence of her grief, that she might not wound still more deeply her almost breaking heart. Gently and tenderly she arranged the pillows, and moistened the parched lips of her father, while a bright smile stole over his pallid face; and strength seemed to flow into his fainting form from his gentle Mary's presence.

"Kneel, my child, and receive my dying blessing," he said; and Mary bowed her head before him, and with his cold, weak hands resting upon her shining hair, he commended his loved ones to God. "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord guard thee and shield thee from evil and temptation; the Lord lead thee to the green pastures and beside the still waters; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

The crimson light of the setting sun filled the half darkened room with a soft splendor, and the old man whispered—"Sing our evening song once more, Mary." Mary's heart and voice were full of tears and sobs, but she arose, and smoothing back the curls from her pale face, she sang, low and tremblingly at first, but soon full, soft and clear, the hymn they had often sung at that quiet hour.

Heavenly Father, may thy blessing
Rest upon us through this night;
Wilt Thou kindly guard from danger
Till the dawn of morning light?
We would thank Thee, oh, our Father,
For the blessings of this day,
And with deep, heart-felt contrition,
For forgiveness humbly pray.

May Thy love dispel the darkness,
Which hath veiled our souls in night :
May Thy Spirit guide our footsteps
In the paths of peace and right.
May our faith be strong and fearless :
May our hope be firm and sure ;
May the blood of Christ, our Saviour,
Cleanse our souls and make them pure.

As the last notes swelled out clear and sweet and then died softly away, there were a few wandering words, of which "Home" and "Saviour" alone were distinct, a quick gasp, and Mary was fatherless, and her mother a widow. But in that hour of bitter, overwhelming anguish, Mary hushed her own sorrow, that she might soothe and comfort her mother, who, worn with watching, anxiety and grief, was prostrated by disease. For many days, life and death seemed striving for the mastery. This double sorrow was felt most keenly by Mary's peculiarly sensitive heart ; but she attended quietly and promptly to all her duties, watching her mother untiringly, and only yielding to her emotion when alone in the silence of her chamber.

Hers was a nature that grieved for sympathy ; but so very delicate and refined were the chords of feeling, that it must be a light and delicate touch to make a response without jarring rudely. We, the companions of her happier hours, could not speak the sympathy we felt, she was so calm, so quiet ; but we knew by her pale face, and sad, dreaming, abstracted air, that she was suffering. Only one knew how to sympathize in words, and that was Henry Martin. He was the gayest, drollest fellow in the whole village, and we had never thought him capable of one serious thought until the shadow fell over Mary's spirit, and then we found that he could be really thoughtful and sad—and we soon began to whisper among ourselves that he was in love with gentle Mary Lee. Nor was it much to be wondered at either, for they had been playmates and firm friends from childhood, he being but two or three years the oldest. The large gardens of Mr. Martin and Mr. Lee were divided by a little babbling brook, overhung by great, gnarled old trees, all festooned and wreathed with wild grape-vines, and shading the softest and greenest of turf, where violets, and starry little anemones, and fragrant wild honeysuckles, and roses, found a cool, pleasant home beside the sparkling stream. Here, Henry and Mary had passed many a happy hour in childhood, and here, when she could leave her mother a little time, they met again ; and it was plainly to be seen, his manner towards her had changed. With us, he was gay, joyous, and careless as ever ;

but his eye had a deeper light when it rested on Mary's fair face, and his voice was lower and more affectionately respectful when addressing her. Every one saw it but Mary ; she did not seem to notice it. The weeks passed on, and autumn yielded to winter, as Mrs. Lee slowly recovered. Still Mary was pale and drooping in consequence of deep sorrow and constant, anxious watchings beside her mother ; and so Henry's pretty little sleigh often stopped at the widow's mansion, and Mary, warmly wrapped in her furred mantle, was lifted tenderly into it ; and many a long, exhilarating sleigh-ride was taken into the surrounding country : and when at last spring came with her birds and flowers, and warm, pleasant sunshine, the rose came back to Mary's pale cheek and lip, and the old light to her blue eyes ; yet something deeper and holier, a glance of tenderness and dreamy thought, looked out from their calm depths ; for a new life was awakened in her pure young heart, a new light had illumined her existence.

All through the long, bright summer, the long walks and conversations beside the little brook became more frequent, and Mary came back with a deeper color on her cheek, and a brighter smile on her lips—Henry too was changed. He was no longer the life of our social gatherings, with song and jest and merry laughter ; he had grown so manly and grave and dignified, that we romping girls were half afraid of him. So the autumn and winter passed again, drearily enough to Mary, part of the time ; for Henry Martin was in his uncle's counting-house in New-York.

In the spring, she also went to the city, on a visit at her uncle's : and Henry, as might be expected, found it convenient to pass his evenings there. He was well received as the friend of Mary, although they had no previous acquaintance with him.

Mary's cousin, Matilda Horton, was a tall, elegant looking girl, whose dark sparkling beauty, made a much more imposing appearance than Mary's quiet loveliness. She was indeed beautiful, with glossy black hair wound in thick, shining braids around her head, clear, flashing eyes, and a small, haughty mouth ; and she was proud, for every glance and step and motion betrayed it. From a child she had been indulged, not so much because of partial love, as from the fact that her mother was a mild, quiet woman, with very little talent or tact in governing her family ; while Matilda, like her father, was passionate, headstrong and impetuous : so, as she grew up, the firmness which might, if directed aright, have been an element of good in her character, degenerated into self-will and obstinacy ; the quick impulses of her ardent nature, became passionate anger and

careless rashness ; and she with her strong passions and reckless impetuosity, was one to be loved with fear and trembling.

"How do you like Matilda?" asked Mary, as she and Henry sat alone in the parlor one evening.

"She is the most beautiful girl I ever saw," replied Henry enthusiastically. "Such splendid hair and eyes, and such queenly grace."

Henry's eyes were so dazzled by her proud beauty, that Mary seemed quite plain to him beside her ; but if he had not before thought her beautiful, he would on that night.

A small party had gathered there, and never had Matilda appeared so brilliant and queenly. Her face glowing with excitement, her dark eyes flashing with mirth and triumph, her light laugh ringing merrily through the rooms, she seemed the personification of mirth and beauty. Henry appeared to be fascinated. His eyes followed her as she moved among the company or floated through the graceful dance ; he seemed to hear nothing but her musical voice, see nothing but her proud form. Matilda saw his admiration with secret pleasure, for she was somewhat of a coquet ; and although she knew the relation in which he stood to her cousin, she, with her natural reckless selfishness and disregard for the feelings of others, determined to add him to the list of her suitors ; so she sang and danced and conversed with him, until Mary was almost forgotten, and he went home with his brain in a whirl of excitement.

Mary's bridal morn, for which we girls had waited so impatiently, came at last ; one of the loveliest in glorious, rose-wreathed June, and a bevy of laughing maidens gathered in Mrs. Lee's pleasant parlor, to take leave of Mary Lee, for she was going on a bridal tour, and then to live in New York, where Henry Martin had entered into business. Then we must assist in arraying her in her bridal robes. How very lovely she looked in her snowy dress, with gleaming pearls, Henry's beautiful gift, clasped around her fair neck and arms.

"Let me fasten this baudéau of pearls in your hair," said one.

"Oh, no," said Mary, "I like roses better."

"Well, then, I'll go and bring some."

"Oh, let me go and get them," said Mary. "I must go down to my old seat at the brook before I leave home, so I will go now," and she tripped lightly away, disappearing among the vines and shrubbery at the foot of the garden.

"Why isn't Henry here?" inquired some one.

"He wrote to Mary that he could not possibly come until this

morning, as business of importance detained him," answered Mrs. Lee; "but it is time he were here now."

"Here's a letter, ma'am," said the post-boy, putting his head in at the door.

It bore Mary's name, so I ran down the garden to give it to her. She was sitting at the foot of an old elm, where the brook twisted along among the roots at her feet, her lap full of white roses, of which a wreath was woven among her soft curls. She looked up at me with a bright smile, but a grave, troubled expression passed over her face as she looked at the letter. I left her alone to read it, for I surmised that it was from Henry.

"What does keep Mary so long?" and "Why don't Henry come?" were questions on every one's lips. At last Mary came, but oh, how changed! Her joyous smile was gone, and a look of hopeless misery and desolation had settled upon her pale face.—What a mockery seemed those pearls, and the bridal wreath of snowy buds and roses, when we looked into her despairing face! She dropped the crushed letter into her mother's lap, and with a feeble, tottering step, passed from the room. Mrs. Lee read it, and as she rose to go to Mary, she gave it to me, saying, "Read it, and pray for my poor Mary." It read thus:

"Oh, Mary! how can I tell you all? What shall I say? Can I tell you that I love you no longer? that another has usurped your place in my heart? Yet I must tell you, for how could I vow to love you only, when I worshiped another? I have striven against it—I have tried to forget her, but it is impossible. My only consolation is the thought that your heart is too calm and passionless, to love with such wild, absorbing fervor and adoration. May God protect you, Mary, for you are pure and good. Farewell. HENRY."

Ah! how little did he know of Mary Lee's heart. Silently and sadly we returned home, thinking expressed sympathy would be out of place at such a time. It was soon known through the village that Mary would not be married, and scandal had many an idle tale about it; but Mary went about her accustomed duties so quietly and pleasantly, that people were at last tired of talking and wondering, and the final conclusion among some of her acquaintance was, that she had no heart, or else that she never really loved Henry Martin. But could they have looked into her heart, and seen the fierce struggle there, or have seen her as she knelt in the silence of her chamber, weeping and praying for strength to bear the bitter agony which oppressed her spirit, they would have thought otherwise. There was a shadow on her fair face, a sad, troubled look in

her blue eyes ; but after a time, the delicate flush came back to her cheek, and the old smile, more pensive and sorrowful perhaps, but none the less sweet, to her lip. She was slowly conquering, and the dark shadow which had fallen around her path was fading away.

In a brilliantly lighted and richly furnished parlor, a bridal party is assembled. Matilda Horton, in the full glow of her queenly beauty, stands beside Henry Martin, and the vow which makes them one forever is repeated. And there, too, as bridesmaid, is Mary Lee, with a face pale as the robe she wears. But calm, and self-possessed, she moves through the rooms, and Henry Martin says to himself—"She did not love me, or she could not have forgotten it so soon ;" yet when those low tones fall on his ear, or he catches a glance from those mournful eyes, his conscience reproaches him, and he half wishes his radiant bride was gentle and meek like Mary Lee, for he has already begun to feel that the vision of beauty which fascinated him, is far from faultless. Had Mary Lee forgotten that she had ever loved him ? Ah ! he did not see her when Matilda's letter, saying that she was to be married, and that Mary must certainly be bridesmaid, lay before her. She knew that Henry Martin was unworthy of the love she had lavished upon him, but the affection which had grown up in her heart from childhood, was not to be lightly cast aside. She loved rather the *memory* of what he had been, than himself, and it was very hard to forget these old feelings and old affections connected with him ; and when she stood beside his bride, and heard him vow to love and cherish her alone, she felt faint and giddy, for a vision of the vine-wreathed bower by the brook, where he had once circled her with his strong arm, and whispered, "My own forever," rose before her ; but with a prayer for strength, she stilled the wild tumult of her heart. And then the proud bride went to her splendid city home, to enter upon a life of fashionable gaiety, and Mary returned to her quiet home in the green country, to strive and pray that she might forget the unfortunate love which had shadowed her young life.

Four years passed away, and Mary still dwelt in her mother's pleasant home. The blight which had fallen upon her spirit, had gradually departed, and she was lovelier and more gentle and kindly than ever. True, there was a mournful cadence in her voice, and a pensive sadness in her smile, which told of suffering, but they were the traces of past suffering. One day she received a hurriedly written, blotted letter from Matilda, requesting her immediate presence.—Surprised at such an unexpected request, she was quickly on the way. Upon reaching Henry Martin's sumptuous mansion, she was

shown to Matilda's room, where she found her with pale, anxious face, and disordered dress, lying upon the sofa.

"Oh, Mary, I am so glad you have come! Don't let Henry go away, will you? You can prevail on him to stay. I have lost my power over him. Oh, don't let him leave me!" she exclaimed, seizing Mary's hand, and looking imploringly into her face.

"Why, Matilda, what do you mean? what is the matter?" inquired Mary.

"Oh, Mary! I have been so foolish—so wicked. I have dressed most expensively, and given costly parties, ever since we were married; and now, for more than a year, Henry has often remonstrated with me, telling me that I was ruining him by my extravagance, and this I ought to have known; but it only roused my anger, and I have retorted and reproached him with meanness, and high words and angry recriminations have estranged our hearts. And yesterday, oh Mary, I am ashamed to tell you, I reproached him with having loved you, more than myself; and when he asked me to take back the cruel words, I told him I believed he loved you yet, and he said he only wished he had married you, or that I were more like you: and so much was said I fear we can never, never forget it—and now he is going away, for he says I am so passionate and extravagant he can live with me no longer"—and she sank back, sobbing, upon the sofa.

Mary's face was pale, and her lips firmly compressed, for a tide of bitter memories was sweeping over her, and the old agony came rushing back to her heart. But in a few moments she quietly asked,

"Where is he going?"

"To China," sobbed Matilda; "the firm with which he is connected, wish a resident partner there, and he is going."

"Would you be willing to go with him, if he were willing to forgive and forget the past, and take you with him?" inquired Mary, after musing for some time.

"Oh! Mary, how did you come to think of that? I will go with him gladly, if he will only take me," cried Matilda, with a flush on her pale cheek, and a sparkle in her eye. "But I have provoked him beyond the possibility of reconciliation, I fear," she added despondingly.

"'Hope for the best,' is my motto," said Mary, smiling, as she moved towards the door. "Where can I find Henry?"

"In the library perhaps;" and Mary glided lightly down the broad stairs, and tapped with a beating heart at the library door.

"Come in," said a cold, stern voice, and Mary entered.

There, pale and stern, sat Henry Martin, surrounded by papers which he was arranging. He started to his feet in surprise at seeing Mary Lee there ; for he knew not that Matilda had written to her. He stammered a welcome, and bade her be seated. Both were silent. Mary felt she had a delicate task to perform, and she shrunk from it ; and then the sight of Henry recalled painful feelings which had long slumbered ; not that she still loved him, but the very memory of that vain love and its quenched hopes, was painful to her sensitive heart. At length she nerved herself to say calmly,

"I have come to speak to you about taking your wife to China with you."

"To China !" repeated Henry in surprise.

"Yes," answered Mary ; "I think that would be the best thing you could do under the circumstances."

"Then you know all. Oh, Mary, how you must despise me ! I who have broken the most solemn vows, and blighted your brightest hopes. Oh ! if Matilda were only like you, good and gentle—"

"Sir," interrupted Mary, rising, and drawing up her slight figure, until it looked really haughty and majestic—"Sir, do you know to whom you are speaking ? I came here to speak of your contemplated journey to China, and not to hear eulogies of myself."

"Pardon me," said Henry confusedly, "did you not say something about Matilda's going with me ?"

"I did."

"That is impossible," he added sternly. "After what has passed, I could never live happy with her. I have borne too much already."

"Not if she strove earnestly to overcome her frailties ?" pleaded Mary.

"That she has never done, though often promised," replied Henry.

"But now she is so truly penitent, so anxious to be reinstated in your esteem, that I have no doubt of her sincerity," persisted Mary ; "and with her determined will and natural strength of character, she will perform what she purposes to do."

"I know too well the strength of her will," replied Henry ; "it has been the principal cause of all our unhappiness. She could never brook the slightest remonstrance from me ; and although in cooler moments she has always seemed sorry that her passionate temper led her into such excess, the feeling has been evanescent, vanishing with the next real or fancied provocation ; and I have come to the conclusion, that it will be better for us to live apart, as we cannot live happily together."

He said this with a cold, stern expression and voice, and Mary des-

paired. She sat silent a few moments, thinking what next to say, when the door opened softly, and a beautiful little girl of three years old, stood gazing slyly at her, and then glancing doubtfully at her father, as if uncertain what kind of a welcome she would meet. Mary looked with admiration at the large black eyes, so like Matilda's, except that a glance of tenderer feeling lurked in their depths, and the fair brow and neck, around which clustered a profusion of silky black curls.

"Come here, Emily," said Henry, holding out his hand. "You have been sadly neglected, poor child," he continued, as if speaking to himself, as he lifted her to his knee, and she nestled her head in his bosom.

"Can you leave her?" asked Mary. "How can you live in that far-off land, with no loving voice to cheer you; no hand to smooth your pillow in sickness; no loved one to whisper consolation to you in sorrow?"

Henry turned his face partly away, and rested his cheek on the child's soft curls, and Mary saw tears trembling on his eye-lashes.—She glided softly from the library, and going up to Matilda's room, bade her go down to her husband. Matilda sprang up with a gleam of joy on her pale face.

"Oh! Mary," she exclaimed eagerly, "has he indeed consented to forgive me and forget the past?"

"He has said nothing of the kind," replied Mary; "but his heart is touched: and if you will go to him now, I think all will be well."

"Bless you, Mary, for this—I have not deserved so much kindness," said Matilda with tearful eyes, as she left the room.

Mary sat listening to her light footsteps until the library door closed, and an earnest prayer followed the erring, but repentant wife. She buried her face upon the sofa cushions, and deep sobs struggled up from her aching heart. The sight of Henry Martin had opened afresh a fountain of feeling she had deemed exhausted, and if the old love did not burn anew in her heart, the memory of its joys and hopes, and its rudely severed links, was enough to make her sensitive heart overflow with bitterness. Her spirit was like a delicate harp, a part of whose strings had been snapped asunder, but which still gave forth wild, melancholy music. But a prayer went up to the Fountain of Strength, and the weak human heart was strong again. Weary of sitting alone in the boudoir, Mary descended to the parlor, and busied herself with the books and paintings.—An hour passed, and Henry and Matilda entered. Mary looked up anxiously, and what a change met her eye! Matilda, as radiantly

beautiful as when a proud and happy bride, her dark eyes filled with the heart's happiness, her cheeks glowing as roses, and a bright, joyous smile lighting up her face. Henry, too, though grave and thoughtful, looked happy, and Emily laughed and capered about the room, tossing her glossy curls, and chattering her sweet childish words, as if new light were infused into her heart. No one rejoiced more sincerely in this reconciliation, than did Mary, and a happy party gathered around the centre-table that evening. The unpleasant circumstances preceding Mary's visit were not adverted to, but the journey to China was talked over; and it was decided that Mary should stay and assist in the preparations. At another time, and under other circumstances, Matilda could not have been prevailed on to go; but now she entered upon the project with the usual impetuosity of her fiery nature. She had thought deeply and seriously in the solitude of her own chamber, during her estrangement from her husband, and had seen herself in a new light. She saw clearly that she had been the first cause of nearly all the unhappiness in her family, and she could as clearly trace it all to her own ungoverned passions and desires. In the depths of her heart she resolved, that, cost what it might, she would conquer herself, and for the first time in her life, she looked to God for help; and Mary, with her gentle, meek piety, and firm, enduring faith, was an invaluable friend and counsellor. She had passed through the ordeal herself, and, through the strength which is given to the humble, she had conquered.

Time passed on, Matilda growing less irritable and selfish, though not without great exertions and many failures, and Henry gaining confidence in her promised reform, and respect and love for her character. She often spoke of her trials, and failures, and good resolutions, to Mary, and in return received kind advice, and the sympathy of a tried and purified heart.

"I tried to win Henry's love," she said, as they sat together one day, "but I never tried to make myself worthy of it. I once possessed unlimited power over him, but by my passionate waywardness, I lost his respect and esteem, and without these true love cannot exist."

At length, every thing was ready, and they embarked for their far off residence, and Mary returned to her peaceful home again. In due time, letters came from Matilda, announcing their safe arrival, and speaking joyously of the future, for she had found the secret of true happiness. Three years passed quickly away, and people began to say that Mary would be an "old maid"; but the prospect did not seem very terrifying to her, for her brow was as unclouded and her smile as bright as ever. At long intervals, a letter came, full of

thankful gratitude to her, for the happiness and peace her kind counsels had been the means of conferring upon the self-exiled family. At length, one came in another hand, but one not new to Mary, telling her how Matilda had suddenly died, and pouring out, as if unconsciously, the anguish of a sorrowing spirit. Henry said his own health was failing, and he had no one to whom he could trust his little Emily, so, as soon as his business was arranged, he should return home. Mary read the letter through blinding tears, and a prayer went up for the stricken mourner and his motherless child. In a few months, Henry arrived in New-York, and wrote immediately to Mary, asking her to take charge of Emily, until his arrangements were completed. Mary gladly complied with his request, and the little girl soon made her quiet home merry with her gay laughter. In a few weeks, Henry came back to his native village, but so altered that his old friends scarcely knew him. Consumption had wasted his figure to a shadow, and the short dry cough, crimson cheeks, and brilliant eyes, told too surely that his days on earth would be few. Yet he looked forward to a long life confidently and cheerfully, attributing his indisposition to his long sea-voyage. His parents had long since died, and his brothers removed ; so he took up his abode during his stay, with Mrs. Lee.

It was bright, gorgeously-mantled autumn, and a glory veiled the fading woodlands. Henry was fond of wandering over the old-homestead, now passed into stranger hands, and down by the little brook where he and Mary had spent so many happy hours. She often went there too ; but it was always alone ; for too many deep memories clung to that cherished spot, to make it pleasant to her when others lingered in its cool, dim haunts. Henry, instead of improving, grew weaker daily. Still he purposed returning to New York.

The afternoon before he was to leave, he visited all the old familiar places, and lingered long at the old elm, where so many years before, he had breathed a tale of love in Mary's ear. The sun went down behind the blue hills, and still he returned not ; and Mrs. Lee's household became alarmed. Mary was standing in the garden watching a path which led across the meadows and fields to a little hamlet, where he had intended to pass part of the afternoon, when she heard her own name called faintly. She listened, and heard it more distinctly ; and following the sound, she descended the narrow path which led to the brook ; and there, stretched on the turf, at the root of the well-remembered elm-tree, lay Henry Martin. Mary could see through the gathering twilight, that his face was deadly pale, and that a pool of blood had gathered round his head. She compre-

hended all in an instant, and speaking a few words of encouragement to him, she hastily returned for aid ; and in a few moments, the fainting form was borne into the house, and a physician was watching over him. A blood-vessel had been ruptured, and although there was no immediate danger, all felt that his life was ebbing away.

Mary quietly took her place at his bedside, watching over him unceasingly. After a time, a measure of strength slowly returned, and he could leave his couch, and sometimes walk in the garden, now almost shorn of its beauty by the autumnal frosts. But Mary was always his companion now, for she feared to leave him alone, and he seemed ever restless and dissatisfied when she was absent from his side.

One day, they had wandered farther than usual, and were sitting in the same place where Mary had read the fatal letter which had caused her so much misery. Not a word had been spoken, and both sat watching the purling stream which glanced along almost beneath their feet. At last, Henry said, in a low voice,

"Mary, do you remember sitting here once before this?"

Mary knew very well the time to which he referred, and she trembled violently, as a crimson flush mantled her face. She made no answer ; and he continued :

"I have sat here hour after hour, and dreamed of the happiness I enjoyed in this lonely spot. The memory of those times, has ever been a bright spot in my existence, to which I have ever turned with a painful delight. I can truly say that I have never been really happy since. I have felt a wild, intoxicating pleasure ; but not the deep, quiet joy I then experienced. Fool that I was to dash the cup of bliss to the earth, and wound the heart of the truest friend I ever had. If I did not know your meek gentle spirit, I should fear to plead for forgiveness."

"You have been forgiven from the first," said Mary gently ; "but had we not better return to the house ? the evening air is chilly."

"Wait, Mary ; I must tell you what is in my heart. I must tell you how I have cherished your memory as something holy. Your image was for a time eclipsed ; but it was never totally effaced.—Nay, I can read the reproving glance of your eyes. There was no sin in loving you, as I should have loved your memory, had you been dead—and you were dead to me. I loved Matilda ; but it was with an affection altogether different from that which I felt for you. Her brilliant beauty, her fiery, impulsive nature, and showy accomplish-

ments, captivated and bewildered my senses ; but there was no deep, abiding happiness. It was a feverish, fascinating dream."

He paused a moment, and then, in a lower and sadder tone, went on :

"Mary, I have been a lonely, restless man. I have come back to my old home to die ; and must my last hours be spent, with no loving voice to soothe and cheer me ? no heart to beat responsive to my own ? You loved me once, Mary. Has that love died out ? Is there no spark left upon its altar, from which its fires may be again kindled ? I do not ask you to be my bride ; it would be but the bridal of death. But the knowledge that you loved me as in the olden time, would shed light and happiness over my pathway to the tomb."

Mary turned her tearful face towards him, and laid her hand in his, saying, in a low, but clear, steady tone,—

"Once, long ago, I plighted my heart to you in this very place ; and the memory of the love which shed its gladness over my young life, has ever been cherished, though mingled with pain and bitterness. Much of my life since then, has been a struggle to conquer the affection I felt to be vain and sinful ; but slowly, and almost unconsciously, it has again asserted its power over my heart,—and now, in life or in death, I am yours once more."

Henry felt warm tears falling upon his hand, and a deeper and holier happiness filled his heart, than he had felt since he stood with Mary under the old elm tree, years ago. And Mary's heart, too, thrilled with an emotion of joy to which she had long been a stranger—joy that she was still fondly loved, for she had felt desolate and lonely, even in her happiest hours. They walked silently through the gathering twilight to the house, and each lay wakeful many hours after the parting "good night" had been uttered, thinking of the new happiness which brightened their existence.

For a time, Henry's weak frame rallied, under the influence of the new feelings and hopes which had sprung up in his heart, and he even began to hope again for health ; but with the advance of winter, with its chill, piercing winds, this hope vanished, and all felt that he was gradually, but surely passing away. Still, it was a happy household, for love gilded the cloud that hung over it. As the physical powers of the failing invalid grew feeble, the spiritual nature shone forth with redoubled strength. There was a refinement of feeling, a delicacy of perception, a purity and power of thought and imagination, which had never been observable while the body

was in health. It seemed more as if one of the family were going on a pleasant journey, than as if he were standing at the portal of death ; and so, indeed, they looked upon it.

"I am going home," said Henry on one occasion : "to a far happier and brighter home than this, and how can I grieve and repine ! The Father hath called me, and I will obey cheerfully. I go now, and in a little time all my loved ones will be with me."

Thus, the time passed pleasantly and cheerfully, through the long winter, and when the warm breath of spring called out the birds and flowers and whispering leaves, the trembling spirit stood on the verge of life. It was a bright afternoon in May, and Henry had been raised up, that he might look for the last time on the beauty of earth.—Mary sat quietly beside him, with the tears stealing slowly over her pale face, but there was no wild, passionate grief. Emily had climbed upon the bed, and lay with her face buried in the pillows, sobbing bitterly—

"Oh, papa, don't die, as poor mama did. I shall be all, all alone. Oh, don't leave me, papa !"

Mary put her arm tenderly around the sorrowing child, and laying her face beside hers, whispered words of comfort and love, till her wild grief was stilled, and raising her head, and winding her arms around Mary, she said—

"I will stay with Mary—she will love me when you are gone away to heaven."

The dimming eyes of the dying father lighted up with a sudden glance of tenderness, as they rested on Mary and his child, and then they wandered to the Bible, lying beside him. Mary understood the glance, and taking the holy book, she read, in a low, tremulous voice, passages of triumph and consolation : "Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Mary paused and looked up. An ashy pallor had settled upon Henry's face, a dimness gathered over his fixed eyes, his lips moved, and she bent her head to catch the faint tones, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit," and with that whispered prayer the spirit departed.

Mary's heart was lonely once more, but not with such utter, oppressive desolation as it had felt in former days. There fell a deeper shadow of thoughtfulness upon her still fair face, and there was that in the low tones of her voice, and the glance of her clear eyes, which

told of communings with holy things ; of aspirations and feelings, purified and ennobled by suffering and patient endurance. Henry had left his child in her care, and in the quiet peacefulness of her mother's home, she found happiness in directing and superintending little Emily's education, watching her merry play, and listening to the clear laughter and joyous tones which made her home ring with glee. After a while, her glossy curls were gathered into smooth braids, and the slight wrinkles in her fair brow told that she was descending the "vale of years." She lived on, quiet and gentle and kind as ever, cheering her mother's declining years, ministering to the necessities of the poor and needy around her, and to the happiness and enjoyment of her friends. Under her judicious training, Emily Martin grew to womanhood, a warm-hearted, generous, high-spirited creature. She inherited her mother's dark brilliant beauty, as well as her impulsive, fiery temperament ; but Mary's firm, yet gentle restraint, her lessons of piety and humility, her unvarying example of meekness, faith and patience, sanctified by prayer, developed the good principles in Emily's character, which had lain dormant in Matilda's, overgrown by the rank weeds of pride and obstinacy.

As the years crept by, Mary watched tenderly her mother's declining health, cheering her passage to the tomb by love and devotion ; and when the form she had so loved and revered lay cold and still in death, she looked through her tears to Him who "doeth all things well," and bowed uncomplainingly to the decree. Emily was now the bride of one worthy of the prize, and Mary found a happy home with the much loved child of her adoption. Gradually her sunny hair became silvery, and her light step feeble, and peacefully as the melting of a cloud from the summer sky, she passed to her rest, leaving bright and pleasant memories in the hearts of all who knew her excellence.

As some consolation for the fears of the brave and the follies of the wise, let us reflect on the magnanimity that has been displayed by the weak, and the disinterestedness that has been evinced by the mistaken ; by those who have indeed grossly erred, but have nobly acted. This reflection will increase our veneration for virtue, when even its shadow has produced substantial good, and unconquerable heroism ; since a phantom, when mistaken for *her*, has been pursued with an ardor that gathered force from opposition, constancy from persecution, and victory from death.

BETHANY.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

The pale moon lingers on the hills
 O'erhanging peaceful Bethany—
 Her silent glance the valley fills,
 And follows one lone traveller; he
 With dust upon his garment's hem
 Slow walking from Jerusalem.

'Tis moonlight silvering thus his hair,
 It is not age retards his tread,—
 Acquainted well with grief and care,
 He hath not where to lay his head.
 A King, disguised and outcast, wends
 To rest among his lowly friends.

They stay for him their evening meal;
 And Mary lingers at the door
 To see his coming shadow steal
 Between the palms, along the floor,
 And anxious Martha wonders why
 The Master's footfall draws not nigh.

The shadow falls. The step is heard,
 Like dew descends his calm "All hail!"
 The welcome accents of the Lord
 Float in upon the evening gale,
 And Lazarus and his sisters twain
 Forget their orphanage again.

For Jesus' words the heart could thrill,
 Than tenderest mother's dearer far—
 "Lo! ye who do my Father's will
 My sisters and my brethren are—
 His glory shall ye shew with me,
 Your hearts our chosen house shall be."

He seats him by the open door,
 Beneath the palm-tree's fan-like shade,
 While Martha guards the household store,
 Meek Mary will her hair unbraid
 To wipe the Master's weary feet
 That she hath bathed with ointment sweet.

While thus her lowly place she keeps,
 The Saviour talks of death at hand—
 And Mary bows her head, and weeps
 At words she cannot understand.
 One gentle whisper soothes her pain,
 "Be sure the dead shall rise again."

Yet, as he speaks, within his eyes
 A sadness grows, of tears unshed;
 Tears that shall fall where Lazarus lies,
 And not alone for Lazarus dead;
 But pitying tears for unbelief—
 For promises forgot in grief.

And Lazarus reads, in musings dim,
 His fate, foreshadowing the Lord's:
 Oh blest! to die, to rise like Him!
 While all the listening air records;
 The moonlight, thro' the palms swept down,
 Rests on the Saviour like a crown.

Love crowned Thee, Lord, at Bethany—
 Alas! a heavier coronet
 Awaited in Gethsemane—
 There, blood-drops round thy brows were set;
 Rubies from Sorrow's deepest mine;
 Mysterious crown of Love Divine.

Affection's meed we too would bring—
 Thou wilt our Friend, our Brother be,
 Who closer to each other cling,
 Because we closely cleave to Thee.
 By love o'ershone, by sorrow tried,
 Forever, Lord, with us abide.

Behold, thy scattered family
 Of human souls, in Thee complete,
 Looks to the distant hills for Thee,
 And listens for Thy coming feet,—
 Oh, bid our guilty discords cease,
 And let Thy Presence bring us peace!

All governments ought to aspire to produce the highest happiness by the least objectionable means. To produce good without some admixture of ill, is the prerogative of the Deity alone. In a state of nature, each individual would strive to preserve the whole of his liberty, but then he would be also liable to the encroachments of others, who would feel equally determined to preserve the whole of theirs. In a state of civilization each individual voluntarily sacrifices a part of his liberty, to increase the general stock. But he sacrifices his liberty only to *the laws*; and it ought to be the care of good governments, that this sacrifice of the individual is repaid him with *security*, and *with interest*; otherwise, the splendid declarations of Rousseau might be verified, and a state of nature preferred to a state of civilization. The liberty we obtain by being members of civilized society, would be licentiousness, if it allowed us to harm others, and slavery, if it prevented us from benefitting ourselves.

THE SUN-FLOWER.

BY ANNA.

It was early one pleasant summer morning, that little Ella skipped gaily down the path that led from her father's house towards the garden ; she wished to gather a small bunch of flowers to present to her parents.

When the child reached the flower-beds she stopped, and gazed admiringly at the many beautiful plants that bloomed around her ; then she bent forward, inhaled their sweet perfume, and with gentle hands raised their drooping heads, and rested them against the slender frames of wood intended for their support.

Ella now began to gather her bouquet. She chose mostly the little delicate flowers, such as the forget-me-not and winter-green, and mingling them with a few rose-buds, had soon arranged a small and tasteful bouquet.

After she had completed it to her entire satisfaction, she walked along the other paths of the garden, gazing in delight at the number of new and beautiful flowers that her father had planted during the last spring. One in particular attracted her attention. It was a very large flower, of a bright yellow color, growing upon a tall, thick stalk, which was shaded by long leaves. Ella stretched her little neck, raised herself on tip-toe, for the flower grew far above her head, and stared in wonder, at its broad, yellow face, which was turned towards the sun, gratefully receiving his warm rays.

When the child returned to the house, she embraced both her parents, and presented them with the bunch of flowers which she had gathered. Her mother placed it in a vase filled with pure spring water, and set it in the center of the breakfast table. Ella then seated herself upon her father's knee, threw her arms around his neck, and exclaimed,

"Please tell me, papa, what is the name of that great big yellow flower that you have planted in the garden this year?"

Her father smiled, and replied,

"It is called the sun-flower, my child. Do you not think it very beautiful?"

"It is not near as pretty as those little flowers," she said, pointing to the vase that stood upon the table. "But why is it called the sun-flower?"

"Because it always turns towards the sun," he answered.

"How strange!" exclaimed Ella in astonishment.

"My little daughter," said her father gravely, as he placed his hand affectionately upon her head, "all things in nature are strange and wonderful; and each in its own season may teach us an instructive lesson. Many flowers open to the sun; but only one follows him constantly. May thy heart, dearest Ella, be like the sun-flower—not only open to God's blessings, but constant in *turning to Him*."

IN THE VALLEY.

~~~~~  
BY HELEN BRUCE.  
~~~~~

FATHER, my way is dark, and full of fears;
My path through life is rough, and stained by tears.
The shadow of the past still o'er me falls—
The future, beckoning grim, my soul appals.

The lines are drawn for me on sterile plains,
Unmoistened by the dew, or summer rains;
No fair and fragrant flowers about me bloom,
Shedding sweet odors through the misty gloom.

My sun has sunk for aye behind the hills;
And twilight, gray and cold, my bosom chills,—
The note of turtle-dove, or singing bird,
In all this gloomy vale is never heard.

No sweet spring waters glide along the plain;
And for their healing flow I thirst in vain:
No sweet-voiced, loving friend beside me smiles,
And to the gloomy way, me reconciles.

Tho' small and weak my frame, no human thing
Reaches to me a hand whereby to cling;
The storms of life pour down on heart and brain,
With shivering limbs I go in the cold rain.

But ever as my soul draws near to death,
Father, Thy love renews my fleeting breath—
Comfort and warmth it sheds through all my veins,
Chasing the deadly chill of those cold rains.

Oh! I had fainted, Lord, long, long ago,
Hadst *Thou* not near me stood in every woe,—
Lover and earthly friend Thou hast denied,
That I *anear to Thee*, might still abide.

Brother, Beloved, King, Redeemer, Lord,
Dear Saviour of my soul, my rich Reward!
For every fiery cross and every pain,
I count the world but dross, Thy love to gain.

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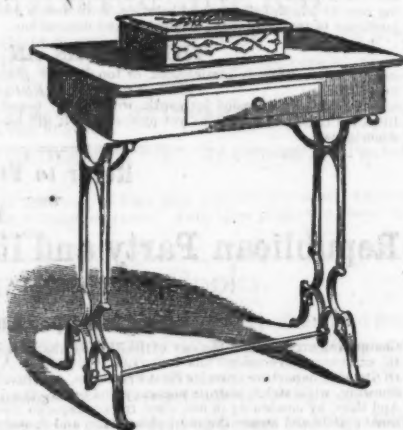
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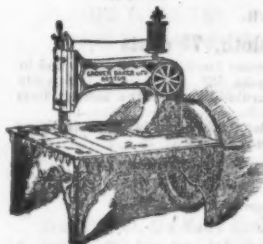
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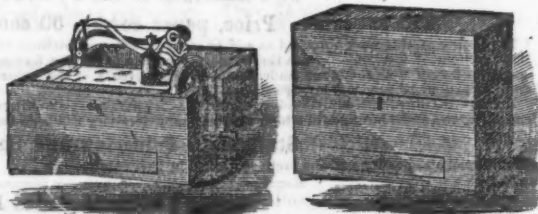
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